

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8738

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1719

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: GALLAGHER AND DYKES

1. ARMA, WHO IS FOUAD TAHINI'S MAIN EMBASSY CONTACT, CHECKED WITH HIM THIS MORNING ON SCENARIO BEING PLANNED FOR MEN'S RELEASE. TAHINI ASSURED HIM OBJECT WAS TO RELEASE MEN QUIETLY AND SAID JUMBLATT DID NOT WISH PUBLICITY. WE ARE NEVERTHELESS CONTINUING OUR PREPARATIONS TO DEAL WITH PUBLICITY AS THERE MAY BE OTHERS WITH DIFFERENT INTENTIONS INVOLVED.

2. TAHINI ALSO ASSURED ARMA THAT SURETE GENERALE DIRECTOR GEN. DAHDAH HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THE PROJECTED RELEASE AND IS VERY HAPPILY GOING ALONG WITH IT. HE SAID THERE SHOULD BE NO JURISDICTIONAL PROBLEMS. ARMA THEN CHECKED WITH DAHDAH WHO HAD NOT BEEN TOLD EXACT TIME OF RELEASE BUT CONFIRMED THERE WAS NO OBJECTION.

3. INFORMANT "B" MADE CONTACT LAST NIGHT. HE SAID PFLP HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO WORK OUT A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH FATAH BASED PRIMARILY ON A NEED FOR COMMON DEFENSE AGAINST THE SYRIANS. ONE OF FATAH'S CLEAR CONDITIONS WAS THAT THE TWO KIDNAPPED AMERICANS BE RETURNED. PFLP HAS AGREED TO THIS CONDITION IN PRINCIPLE AND WAS DUE TO GIVE A SPECIFIC REPLY TODAY ON WHEN AND HOW THE TWO MEN WOULD BE RELEASED. HE
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INDICATED PFLP WERE THINKING ABOUT TURNING MEN OVER

TO NATIONISTFRONT (JUMBLATT-LED LEFTISTS).

4. INFORMANT "B" RECOUNTED STORIES PFLP REPRESENTATIVES HAD GIVEN TO EXPLAIN HOLDING THE MEN. THEY SAID THEY HAD AT FIRST RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT MEN WERE "HIGH LEVEL CIA AGENTS". FATAH OFFICIALS PRESENT, WHO INCLUDED ARAFAT, SAID THAT IF CIA WANTED TO SPY IN THAT AREA OF TOWN WHERE MEN WERE PICKED UP IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT SEND TWO AMERICANS FROM THE EMBASSY. PFLP DID NOT CONTINUE THE ARGUMENT. ARAFAT AND OTHER FATAH NEGOTIATORS PUSHED FOR RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM AS BEST FOR ALL PALESTINIANS.

5. AT LAST MEETING OF HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE WHICH INFORMANT "B" BELIEVED WAS FEBRUARY 23, LEBANESE REP MOUSA KANAAN AGAIN BROUGHT UP THE TWO MEN. THERE WAS LITTLE SPECIFIC RESULT BEYOND GENERAL AGREEMENT TO GET THEM OUT. CHIEF SYRIAN REP ALI MADANI SAID TO FATAH REP THAT SYRIANS ARE COUNTING ON FATAH TO WIN MEN'S RELEASE AS SYRIANS ARE NOT TALKING TO PFLP AT PRESENT.
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